

MICHAEL V. TOOMBS

Founder and CEO

The Storytellers Inc., Artist Collective

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Michael Vance Toombs is an accomplished painter, art activist, and founder and CEO of Storytellers Inc., Artist Collective. Mr. Toombs is a community leader and champion for young people and working artists in the Greater Kansas City area. Michael began as a young student with Matthew Monks at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. He furthered his study through classes at the Kansas City Art Institute and completed a business entrepreneurial course of study through Donnelly College, Kansas City, Kansas. Michael left the corporate world as customer service manager for GHA Insurance to develop his own business in the belief that "Art is a Change Agent for society's difficulties." Michael's current art form is "interactive community based art". The following are examples of the diverse community engagement of Michael Toombs as the director of Storytellers Inc.: *In-light-en-ed*, The Bartle Convention Center Mural, *Urban Literacy Conference*, University of Missouri, Kansas City, *Art and the Entrepreneur Forum*, Wichita State University, *Environmental Art* at the Olorun Foundation, Burkina Faso, West Africa, *What My Eyes See*, film of a child's view of their Quindaro, KCK neighborhood, Department of Education 3-year grant to create Arts Model in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools.

The following offer a glimpse into the work of interactive arts education and community based art projects:

- Storytellers Inc. was awarded a Department of Education grant to develop the Arts Model making mainstream academics more accessible and understandable through the arts. The 3-year grant is one of 6 national grants offered nationally.
- Storytellers Inc won the privilege of creating six installations at KCI Airport through Kansas City's one-percent-for-art program. Storytellers, Inc. was also given the challenge of creating a temporary installation, the Barrier Project, consisting of 90 panels, designed by Michael Toombs, implemented by the artist collective with the young people of KCK and KCMO. Also, Storytellers, Inc. developed KCI Airport installations entitled *Thirty Years of KCI Airport* and *Celebrating the Legacy*.
- The Storytellers Inc., Artist Collective has served over 14,000 young people in arts programming by contract and voluntarily in the last 7 years. Michael Toombs has provided arts education workshops in KIDZONE/Finish the Race Extended, Day, TREC Alternative School, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, Kansas City, Missouri School District, Gifted Students, Teachers in Relationships, Jackson County Juvenile Correction facilities, FEC work project, Jackson County and KCK Housing Authority, the jobs program, JTPA, Kansas City, Kansas, Youth Leadership and Development Corp, HCPP, University of Kansas Medical Center and more.
- Michael Toombs developed the following murals with KC Metro young people and families: The Convention Center at Bartle Hall, 8th Street YMCA, Donnelly College, Missouri City, Flood Recovery and the Tanner Banner at Nelson Atkins Museum.

- Michael directed 400 children from Quindaro Elementary, Kansas City, Kansas on a film, "*What My Eyes See*", a community awareness film. The film was broadcast on channel 62 locally.
- ***The Miracle On 39th Street, A Prospect for Change:*** Michael Toombs and the Storytellers Inc., Artist Collective engaged adjudicated youth, the community of 39th and Prospect, City Government, Combat, Pan Educational Institute and Health Careers Pathways Program of the University of Kansas Medical Center. Using visual and performing art, the collective engaged over 300 area residents in creating a living stage with scenic murals depicting the young people at work, turning a 1965 Buick Wildcat into a mosaic-like mural. Young people were offered workshops in sidewalk poetry, spoken word performances from local professional poets. A project pictorial features the project in the **KC STAR** Magazine.
- ***Dr. James Naismith Sculpture, 2002 Sports Extravaganza:*** Michael Toombs and Storytellers Inc. were commissioned to create the Naismith Sculpture for the 2002 Sports Extravaganza at Union Station. In 2003, the Sports Extravaganza exhibited the Naismith Sculpture at the Hyatt Regency in Downtown Kansas City.
- Children's Theatre, Poetry Magazines, Latin and African Drum Making and Performance, add more color to the artistic palette of Michael Toombs and the Storytellers Inc., Artist Collective.
- Adult Arts Education Development:
 - Mr. Toombs developed curriculum and instructed ***Arts Education*** and ***Arts Entrepreneurship*** for K-20 level. Wichita State University. Toombs provided live Video Uplink with 6 collaborating colleges in the state of Kansas.
 - Mr. Toombs was featured in the following Magazines: **Kansas City Business**, "*The Art of It All*" September 2001, **ART** "*The Business of Art*" Fall/Winter 2001
 - **ART Magazine**, April 2003, featured Michael Toombs as guest columnist.
 - The Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, Nebraska invited Mr. Toombs to direct the Surfacing Conference involving artists in the community-based project ***Murals and Community Based Art***.
 - Jackson County Juvenile Justice, "*Professional Development and Creative Minds*". 2000, 2001, 2002.
 - ***The Art of Learning***, Mr. Toombs serves as a facilitator in an initiative funded by the Kansas Arts Commission and National Endowment for the Arts. **The Arts Learning Collective** developed and implemented a ***Hands-On Professional Development*** component. This component involves an exchange of information and research on arts learning that will mutually benefit classroom teachers, artists, school arts specialists, students, and community youth program providers. The collaborative participants are Storytellers Inc., Artist Collective, Accessible Arts, Inc., Kansas Alliance for Arts Education and the Kansas State Department of Education. 2002, 2003
 - University of Missouri, Kansas City, ***Urban Literacy Conference***, May 2002
 - Provided Poetry Workshop with KC Mentoring Initiative, Urban Transcendence Poet, Glenn North.
 - Michael Toombs has worked with the Department of **Family Medicine and Preventive Medicine and Public Health, University of Kansas Medical** providing art designs for health initiatives, KAN QUIT and Colon Cancer in the African American Community. Mr. Toombs was commissioned to develop the logo, theme, etc. for **NAME**, the National Association for Multicultural Educators, 2004.

- Awards and Recognitions:
 - Accessible Arts and the Kansas State Board of Education's Distinguished Service Award for Arts in Disabilities 2003
 - The City of Kansas City, Missouri awarded Michael Toombs and The Storytellers Inc., Artist Collective a Proclamation for the Miracle on 39th Street, a Prospect for Change, August 2002
 - Youth Leadership and Development Corp, Positive Youth Development Award, May 2002 & 2003
 - Bridging the Gap, Excellence Award for Environmental Art Programming, May, 2002
 - Environmental Protection Agency, Program Excellence Award for Children's Programs, May 2002
 - Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools Award for Excellence, Arts in Schools, 2001
 - Kansas City, Kansas Housing Authority Award for Excellence, 2000, 2001
 - The Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, Breakthrough Award, 1998
 - Bernie Hoffman, Award for Outstanding Community Service, 1998
 - Colgate Palmolive Company, Outstanding Community Service Award, 1997